

Thanksgiving to New Year's Day

Holiday Survival Calendar

If you think surviving on a deserted island is tough, try maintaining a healthful lifestyle during the hectic holiday season. Simply planning for the challenges helps prevent seasonal stress and weight gain. Follow this weekly guide to healthier, happier holidays.

Week 1 (Thanksgiving): Plan!

Thanksgiving week can be a hectic beginning to a busy holiday season. Take time now to reflect on your personal “reason for the season.” Then, make a plan to accommodate your goals and values. Activities you may need to prioritize and schedule include:

- **Exercise**—make it a priority now so you'll burn extra holiday calories, fight off stress, and avoid the New Year rush at the gym.
- **Plan holiday meals**—look for low fat recipes for your holiday favorites.
- **Develop a gift budget**—there's less stress when you know how much you can afford to spend.
- **Social events**—decide which parties and functions you will attend. Plan to take along a healthy dish.
- **Time with loved ones**— quality time together will always be memorable.
- **Volunteering**—helping the less-fortunate makes you feel good.

Week 2: Shop to Drop...Pounds!

Even if you do most of your holiday shopping online or by catalog, you'll probably find yourself at the mall anyway. While fighting crowds and traffic won't put you in a festive mood, use shopping time to your advantage.

- **Park and walk**—park as far from the mall or store entrance as possible when safe.
- **Take a walk around the mall** before and after shopping.
- **Choose the stairs** or walk the escalator instead of taking the elevator.
- **Avoid food court temptations** by stashing healthful snacks—an apple, box of raisins, bottle of water, etc — in your purse.



Week 3: Party for Your Heart

Holiday parties don't have to sabotage your healthful habits. Go to the gatherings where you feel comfortable and will enjoy the company of other guests. You'll spend more time socializing and enjoying yourself than eating. If you do end up bored or alone at an event, stay away from the buffet table and look for someone else who seems up for conversation. Other party tips include:

- **Bring along a heart-healthy appetizer** like veggies and low fat dip or a light dessert like angel food cake.
- **Fill up on low calorie beverages** like diet soda or club soda with a twist of lime instead of high calorie alcoholic drinks, eggnog or regular sodas.
- **Fill your plate with small servings of your favorites**, emphasizing colorful fruits and vegetables. Wait at least ten minutes to go back for seconds to be sure you really are still hungry.

Week 4: Healthful Traditions

Make NEW traditions that emphasize healthful choices.

- **Gather a group of friends to walk** the neighborhood singing holiday carols.
- **Experiment with low fat modifications** to your family's favorite recipes—see if anyone really notices the change!
- If you're overwhelmed with holiday food gifts—tins of cookies or loaves of banana bread—**share with neighbors**.
- Get some **exercise** by offering to take a friend's child or your

grandchild for a winter stroller ride.

- Spend a few hours **helping** out at a soup kitchen or food bank.
- **Shovel snow** for you & your neighbor.

Week 5: Push Yourself...Away from the Table!

However you celebrate the season, it usually involves at least one large family sit-down meal. Some people end up eating several holiday meals throughout the day just to please various family members.

- Remember that you are in **control**, not the food.
- Take moderate **portions** of the foods you like.
- If you've **planned** well, there should be low fat items on the table.
- And **push away** from the table before you feel full.

Week 6: Good Work!

Whether you've followed your holiday plan or gotten a little off track, use this week to refocus, recommit, and remember what you love about the season in the first place.

If leftovers and extra holiday treats keep you heading for the kitchen, take action:

- **Freeze leftovers** in single servings for lunches/quick dinners.
- **Take** extra desserts to work to share with co-workers.
- **Share** food with an elderly neighbor.
- **Invite** friends over for a post-holiday potluck dinner.

Week 7: The New Year

Congratulations! You followed your healthy holiday plan. Greet the New Year with no regrets, no guilt, and no diets. Visit the after holiday sales for some new workout gear!

For more holiday tips, information, and recipes, search the links available at

www.foodandhealth.com.

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